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**CHINESE
FOR EUROPEANS**
欧洲人学中文

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Bulletin

**All over the world
have been
established 332
(end 2010) Confucius
institutes
and 369 Confucius
Classrooms.
In the sole Europe,
Confucius
institutes
have become 87
in the last 2 years.**



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In US there are already more than 1000 high schools which offer Chinese as compulsory course, and according to the most recent studies and surveys the number of European children studying Chinese has increased exponentially.

The idea that Chinese will be, or already is, the language of the future and assuming that China's power and political and economical influence are already a reality, push parents and schools to organize courses for children.

Children classes are becoming more and more popular among parents who strongly believe that learning Chinese at very early age can be extremely easy comparing to the efforts an adult has to do when learning such a language.

Sometimes the enthusiastic approach is more evident among parents than in children, but in a globalized world our children need to have more awareness of the multiethnic society they live in. That is why they should not only study or get used to Chinese language, but it is fundamental to get acquainted to Chinese manners and habits.

Children absorb any input from the external world and learn very quickly and reach pretty satisfactory results in a short period of time: This assumption is also correct for Chinese language.

The very big issue is how to keep children's attention high and constant for 1 hour time.

Usually, a traditional approach to Chinese language fails with European young students. Learning by heart is boring and counterproductive, the risk of abandoning the course is very high and the frustrating feeling of inadequacy is even worse.

One possible key to overcome these problems is following a course which bases on the most update technologies as children are very skilled and used to the new technologies in any form such as computer, mobile phone, mp3, tablets...

Grammar issues should be presented shortly and simply, and concepts should be presented more than one time, and as Latins were used to say, *repetita iuvant*. In order to fix on student's mind the most common grammar structures, exercise is a must, but it need to be enjoyable.

The web offers a wide range of games to propose to children, but most of them are not linked to a complete Chinese course, therefore the approach to Chinese is incomplete and remains a simple pastime which is in no way constructive. On the other hand the ad-

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vantage is to change often the exercises scheme, assuming that the user knows how to recognize the methodology belonging to a particular exercise.

The interactivity of a chinese course is helpful to teachers who need to improve the existing material and tickle

children's curiosity and attention in class.

Another sensitive issue is based on the real difficulty created by Chinese written language. *Hanzi* in some way scare any student, and ask for more time for learning.



On the web there are many **funny games** that help memorizing characters, but it is very important to get the history of the evolution of Chinese characters, from oracular bones to shufa (calligraphy). Not to forget that in China written language is more than a mean of communication: is a proper art and hides a huge cultural background.



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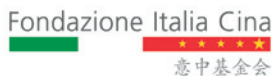
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